

COMPUTERIZED DATA BASE FOR THE FLORIDA COLLECTION OF NEMATODES.

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The Division of Plant Industry has developed a computerized data base for storage and retrieval of information about the many specimens comprising the Florida Collection of Nematodes. The burgeoning volume of data which accompanies a growing collection can become progressively more difficult to store, retrieve, and sort. Additionally, the integrity of conventional filing systems can be compromised readily but unintentionally if records are withdrawn and later misfiled or misplaced.

If the volume of the data base is great, computerized filing systems which store data electronically can search, retrieve, and sort information in a fraction of the time required to accomplish the job manually. An immense amount of time can be saved by sorting and totaling statistical data electronically rather than by hand. With computerized filing, problems of storage are greatly reduced because great quantities of information can be stored on diskettes which may require little storage space. Lastly, computerized filing systems provide reliable mechanisms for protecting the integrity of stored information from human error, mechanical malfunction, and power surges or failure. Data can be stored when generated, and at the end of each day, all new information may be copied onto duplicate diskettes, each of which can be stored in a separate place, one of which could be a fireproof safe. With records thus protected, the possibility of a paper record being lost is circumvented. Additionally, accidental loss of data, or alteration of records resulting from keyboard mistakes by unskilled or unauthorized persons, can be prevented by tamper-proof backup systems and/or coded access to sensitive information.

Records of collection data for specimens in the Florida Collection of Nematodes are entered into a data base designed especially for the collection. The software which drives the data base is PC-FILE III V.4, available from Button Ware, Inc., P.O. Box 5786, Bellevue, WA 98006. The data base template provided in this circular satisfies the needs of the Florida Collection of Nematodes. Some of the field names have been altered from this agency's special usage jargon in order to make their function more easily understood by a greater number of readers. With this data base, field names are limited to 12 spaces. Curators and collectors with different needs may, using the same software, define their data bases by selecting the names, the lengths, and numbers of fields needed to record and store data.

The table which follows describes the data base for the Florida Collection of Nematodes. This may serve as a template for other collections, with or without modification.

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Data base for Florida Collection of Nematodes

Field Name	Spaces	Comments and Explanation
COPY NUMBER	7	Sequential reference number for hard copy retrieval.
GENUS	21	Generic name of specimen.
SPECIES	21	Specific name of specimen.
STAGE	5	Developmental stage: male, female, cyst, juvenile, other.
HOST GENUS	21	Generic name of host.
HOST SPECIES	21	Specific name of host.
LOCUS	3	Where the specimen was found: roots, soil, leaves, etc.
LEVEL	3	This is for coding access to major divisions within the collection, such as bottles or slides.
REFERENCE NO	14	A comprehensive reference number for all units in the collection.
COLLECTION NO	8	Collection placement number for specimen access.
ACCESSION NO	8	Laboratory accession number.
COLLECT DATE	8	Collection date.
PREP DATE	8	Date specimen was prepared (mounted on a slide).
RECEIPT DATE	8	Date specimen was received.
COUNTRY	10	Country of specimen origin.
STATE	5	State of specimen origin.
COUNTY	9	County of specimen origin.
REMARKS 1	65	These 4 lines may be used for additional data or remarks of a narrative nature.
REMARKS 2	65	ditto
REMARKS 3	65	ditto
REMARKS 4	65	ditto
CITY	14	City of specimen origin.
LOCALITY	14	Map coordinates or other site information.
COLLECTOR	14	Name of collector.
CONTRIBUTOR	14	Name of person contributing specimen to collection.
IDENTIFIER	14	Name of person responsible for specimen identification.
PREPARER	14	Name of person who prepared the slide.
FIXATIVE	14	Fixative used.
MOUNTANT	6	Medium in which specimen is mounted.
STAIN	14	Stain employed. Multiple stains are sometimes used.
REGULATORY	3	This indicates whether or not specimen is being retained as evidence for regulatory action.
EXPERIMENT NO	4	Reference number for comparative studies.
LOANED TO	25	Name and agency of person to whom specimen is loaned.
LOAN DATE	8	Date of loan.
RETURN	3	Disposition of return status.
OTHER 1	25	Additional space to be used as needed.
OTHER 2	25	Additional space to be used as needed.
OTHER 3	25	Additional space to be used as needed.

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